

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 10:22 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled joint resolution:

H.J. Res. 83. An act to memorialize and honor the contribution of Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist.

The enrolled joint resolution was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

At 11:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3829. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Muskogee, Oklahoma, as the Jack C. Montgomery Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

H.R. 4204. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer ownership of the American River Pump Station Project, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4902. An act to award a Congressional gold medal to Byron Nelson in recognition of his significant contributions to the game of golf as a player, a teacher, and a commentator.

H.R. 4912. An act to amend section 242 of the National Housing Act to extend the exemption for critical access hospitals under the FHA program for mortgage insurance for hospitals.

H.R. 5037. An act to amend titles 38 and 18, United States Code, to prohibit certain demonstrations at cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration and at Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5311. An act to establish the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1382. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to accept the conveyance of certain land, to be held in trust for the benefit of Puyallup Indian tribe.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1499) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow members of the Armed Forces serving in a combat zone to make contributions to their individual retirement plans even if the compensation on which such contribution is based is excluded from gross income, and for other purposes, with amendment.

At 6:19 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4297) to provide for reconciliation on the budget for fiscal year 2006.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3829. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Muskogee, Oklahoma, as the Jack C. Montgomery Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 4204. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer ownership of the American River Pump Station Project, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4902. An act to award a Congressional gold medal to Byron Nelson in recognition of his significant contributions to the game of golf as a player, a teacher, and a commentator; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 4912. An act to amend section 242 of the National Housing Act to extend the exemption for critical access hospitals under the FHA program for mortgage insurance for hospitals; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were, laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-292. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Michigan relative to funding fully the Select Michigan Agriculture Program through the United States Department of Agriculture; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 181

Whereas, the Michigan Department of Agriculture introduced the Select Michigan campaign in the Grand Rapids area to encourage Michigan residents to purchase locally grown and produced foods. Recently expanded to the Detroit area, the program uses posters, banners, and stickers in Michigan grocery stores and farmers' markets to identify locally grown food products. Since 2001, the Select Michigan program has highlighted the numerous Michigan-grown products available in the state, including apples, asparagus, blueberries, cherries, chestnuts, corn, dry beans, honey, maple syrup, peaches, and strawberries; and

Whereas, access to fresh and nutritious food products is vital to the health and well-being of Michigan residents. Michigan farms, which are second in the nation in the diversity of agricultural products grown, provide residents with a wide variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables. Identifying and marketing these products to the local population enables residents to support Michigan's agricultural industry, which contributes significantly to Michigan's economic well-being. The impact of Michigan's agriculture on our economy is estimated to be \$60.1 billion annually and growing; and

Whereas, in 2001, a one-time block grant of \$3.75 million from the United States Department of Agriculture provided support to launch the Select Michigan program. The program is able to continue due to a unique funding partnership involving the private sector and the federal government. However, to ensure all Michigan residents have access to fresh and nutritious locally grown food products and allow the Select Michigan program to expand to encompass the state, full funding of this program by the federal government is necessary: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the House of Representatives. That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to fund fully the Select Michigan agricultural program through the United States Department of Agriculture; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM-293. A concurrent memorial adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Arizona relative to enacting a 2007 Farm Bill that is supportive of the specialty crop industry; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2001

Whereas, the fruit, vegetable and tree nut production in the United States accounts for \$35 billion in farmgate value, or 33 percent of farm cash receipts, and with the addition of nursery and greenhouse production, overall specialty crops account for 51 percent of farmgate value; and

Whereas, in Arizona, fruit, vegetable and tree nut production represents a \$1 billion industry representing over 35 percent of Arizona's farm cash receipts; and

Whereas, the fruit, vegetable and tree nut industry is a critical and growing component of United States agriculture, deserving of full and equal consideration as other agricultural sectors in the Farm Bill; and

Whereas, the fruit, vegetable and tree nut industry does not seek direct program payments to growers, but rather places its emphasis on building the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of United States fruit and vegetable production; and

Whereas, government investment in the competitiveness and sustainability of the United States fruit and vegetable industry will produce a strong return on investment for all of America, not just farmers, by expanding access and availability of safe, wholesome, healthy and affordable fruits and vegetables. The Farm Bill will be a critical component in reaching the mandate of doubling fruit and vegetable consumption called for in the USDA/HHS 2005 Dietary Guidelines; and

Whereas, with the government's mandate that domestic producers meet the very highest standards in environmental regulation, labor and other areas comes the responsibility to help those producers achieve cost-effective compliance through government investment in this agriculture industry to create a fair, level playing field with international competitors who do not face the regulatory burdens of United States producers; and

Whereas, without appropriate assistance, United States fruit, vegetable and tree nut production will relocate to less restrictive foreign growing areas; and